

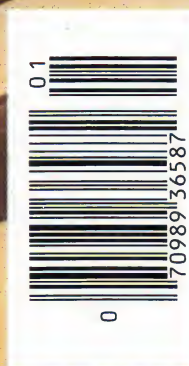
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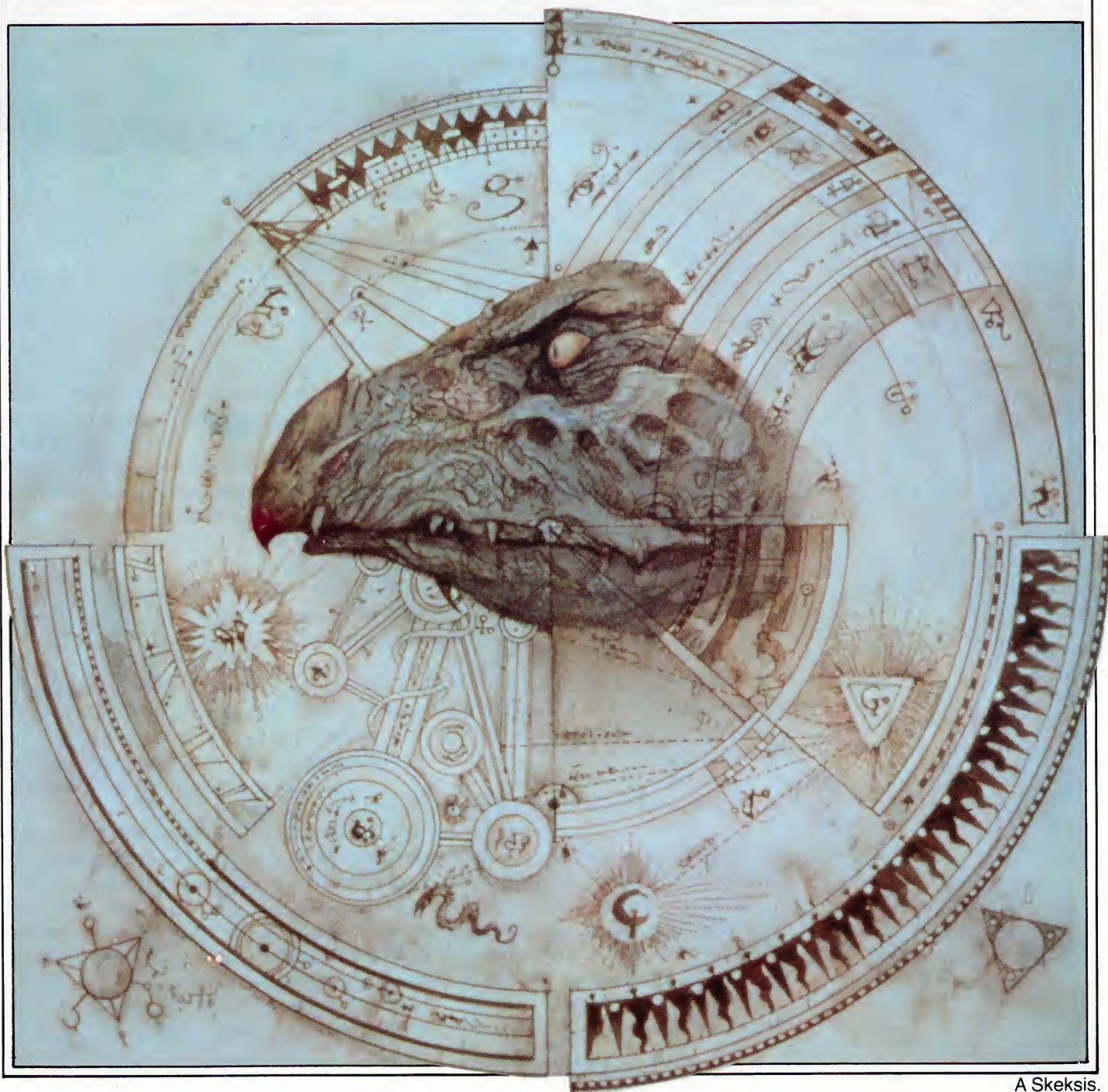
Gallery: *The Dark Crystal:*  
The Twinkle in Brian Froud's Eye,  
by E. All, 63



GALLERY:

# THE DARK CRYSTAL

THE TWINKLE IN BRIAN FROUD'S EYE







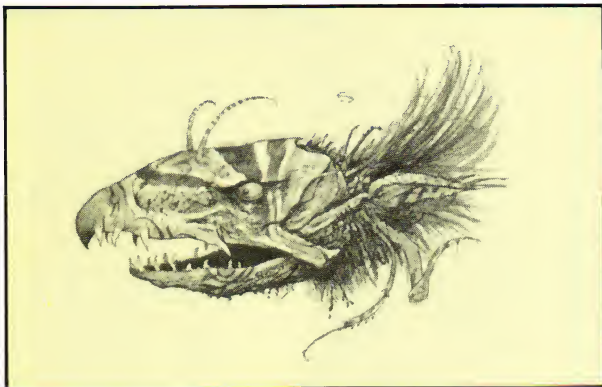
All sketches and illustrations in this spread are by Brian Froud.

# THE DARK CRYSTAL

**D**ue out this December, *The Dark Crystal* is an adventure film chock full o' creatures of enchantment, supernatural beings and extraordinary lands, brought to life on the screen by Jim Henson of Muppet-opolis.

Henson's affiliation with muppetry ends there, for this film is far more advanced and intricate than *Big Bird* and the *Cookie Monster* ever were. And though the film was developed by Henson, Frank Oz, the screenwriter David Odell, and scores of other talented artists, the powerful characterizations were created by Brian Froud; the renowned fantasy artist whose work has been viewed, thus far, in *The Land of Froude* and *Faeries*.





On the previous page: urAc. Above: Two of the many wood beasts. Top right: A Skeksis scientist. Bottom right: Ac the Scribe.

Froud, the English-born conceptual designer for *The Dark Crystal* is uniquely suited to this puppet adventure depicting Jen, a Gelfling from an ancient race of elf-like creatures, who journeys through a wilderness unknown to man, where plants, trees, animals and all living things are mysterious, bizarre and sometimes frightening.

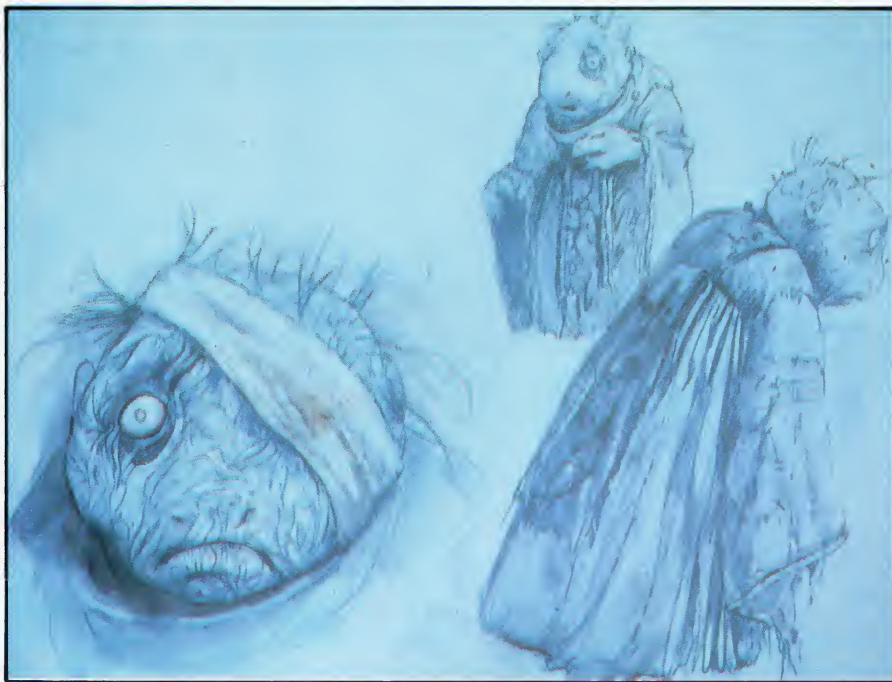
The visual concept of *The Dark Crystal* and the world it portrays is ultimately the creation of Froud and although the idea for the film was Jim Henson's, the creatures evolved through discussion. Henson's idea was for a world that had a life of its own, where plants could communicate and mountains talk to each other. Everything was alive. The world was full of creatures; humans were never involved.

Froud states: "I enjoy tampering with the humorous, and the grotesque. Often, I don't feel as if I'm in control of what I am doing. I put a pencil to paper, and what appears, *appears*. I am just as surprised to see what I do, as anyone else is."

But three years is an awful long time for just "tampering." Froud worked on the set constantly, reworking costumes, set designs and character movement. All of the characters have complex facial movements, some as many as sixteen. The development of the hands capable of picking up an object with a comparatively simple triggering device, is revolutionary to the art of puppetry. There have been hands with maybe







Upper left: Pod People. Lower left: one of your more frightening wood beasts. Above: an urSkeks of the palace of the Dark Crystal.

**“Often, I don’t feel as if I’m in control of what I am doing. I put a pencil to paper, and what appears, *appears*.”**

two fingers that worked, but never anything as advanced as those created for this film. The technology in general, is sophisticated and gives the characters and creatures a living, breathing reality in a nothing but make-believe world.

Do be advised, puppets, and sweet-looking heroes does not a kids movie make—for this film is sophisticated, detailed, and just plain fantastic.

—E. All